Background:
The COVID-19 pandemic has produced major interruptions to the healthcare system, the effects of which have not to date been studied in the dermatology patient population.

Methods:
We utilized a national patient survey to determine the experience of Canadian patients with dermatologic diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results:
The patient demographics are depicted in Table 1. The majority of the respondents received care at a community-based clinic. The skin diagnoses included alopecia, psoriasis, HS, atopic dermatitis, melanoma, skin lymphoma, rosacea, and acne. The information discussed by dermatologists prior to treatment initiation included side-effects, dosing, cost, therapeutic effect, and mechanism of action. A minority of patients experienced new symptoms related to their skin disease during the pandemic. The interactions with dermatologists ranged from in-person appointments to virtual communication or no appointment. The patient preference was for in-person visits compared to virtual. While almost half of the patients had altered some aspect of their lives due to their skin condition (e.g. overall mood, interactions with others, work modification, etc.), only a minority of patients had challenges or concerns taking their medication during the pandemic.

Conclusions:
The data obtained from this qualitative review can help guide future clinical practice guidelines, and serve as an informant for researchers, policy-makers and clinicians regarding the optimal methods of patient-centred care during the pandemic.

Table 1. Patient demographics for Canadian dermatology patients responding to the national COVID-19 survey.

References: